

Crusius harbors a pessimism, albeit one not as deep as Thomasius or Lange, concerning the power of the human intellect, particularly in speculative matters. Moreover, Crusius upholds a libertarian conception of the freedom of the human will, according to which freedom is understood to consist in the power to act otherwise or to refuse to act in the same circumstances. In light of these commitments, Crusius constructs a powerful and systematic rebuttal of the Wolffian philosophy, distinguishing between mathematical and philosophical method, rejecting the Wolffian prioritization of (necessary) essence to existence, defending the soul's natural capacity to move the body (in contrast to the harmonist denial of such influence), designating the will as an equally fundamental power of the mind, and rejecting the Leibnizian identification of freedom with mere spontaneity.

In order to preserve what he considers the genuine freedom of the will, Crusius focuses his critical attention in his *Dissertation* on the rationalist dogma of the principle of sufficient reason. Crusius argues that the principle, as commonly understood, should be limited in the scope of its use precisely so as to exclude its application to the human will. Crusius begins by identifying and resolving ambiguities in the key terms in the principle, including "reason" and "sufficient." Concerning the former he distinguishes between reasons of cognizing and reasons of being and proceeds to identify various species of these in turn (§§I, XVI, XXXIV–XXXIX), and concerning the latter he distinguishes between a reason that merely suffices for a state of affairs and one that determines that state of affairs as necessary such that it could not have been otherwise (§II). A *sufficient reason*, then, in its stronger, Leibnizian interpretation is understood as sufficient in this latter sense, which Crusius designates a *determining* reason. While Crusius accepts that the principle of determining reason applies to most sorts of actions and their effects, he argues that it cannot apply to the actions on the part of the human will which he dubs "free first actions" (§XXV), and he makes his case for this in two steps. First, Crusius offers what he terms an "indirect proof" of this conclusion (cf. §XLI) by arguing (along the lines of Lange) that the principle taken in its unlimited scope entails the absolute necessity of events, a Stoic fatalism, and undermines morality (§§IV–IX); further, Crusius contends that the only reason to think that the principle would apply to the acts of the will is that it is proven through the principle of contradiction which, however, Crusius contends has not been, and cannot be, done (§§X–XV). Crusius then offers his "direct proof" of the *possibility* of first actions by showing that at least God's actions would count as such, as would the acts of the intellect (§§XXIII–XXIV), though he suggests that the reality of *free* first actions specifically can be confirmed directly through inner experience (§IX). This necessitates the limitation of the principle from application to such actions, since as free they cannot be such that the opposite would be impossible (§XXVI). This discussion gives way to a compact presentation of Crusius' account of truth (§§XXVII–XXIX), which bears comparison to that presented by Thomasius in the *Doctrine of Reason*, after which Crusius concludes with more general considerations relating to the Leibnizian principle, its limitation and origin, as well as the possibility of human and divine foreknowledge of free actions (§§XL–XLIX).

The *Philosophical Dissertation on the Use and Limits of the Principle of Determining Reason* was published in 1743 in Latin, with a German translation, including

- Schneewind, J. B, *Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2003) [pp. 568–85 contains a partial translation of Crusius' *Guide*].
- Tonelli, Giorgio, "Vorwort," in *Christian August Crusius. Die philosophischen Hauptwerke*, 4 vols. (Hildesheim: Olms, 1964–87); vol. I, pp. vii–lxv.
- Watkins, Eric, *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005) [pp. 81–93].
- Watkins, Eric, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: Background Source Materials* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009) [pp. 132–79 contain a partial translation of the *Sketch*].

Philosophical Dissertation on the Use and Limits of the Principle of Determining Reason, commonly called the Principle of Sufficient Reason

§I. (*Explanation of the principle of sufficient reason.*) The illustrious Leibniz has posited two principles of human cognition, of which the first is called the principle of contradiction and is familiar to everyone, and the other is called the *principle of sufficient reason*, which he expresses thus: *anything that happens or is true has a sufficient reason why that fact or proposition is so and not otherwise.*¹ Following the illustrious Wolff, a slightly broader formulation, but one which I believe completely conforms to the opinion of the author of the principle, is often expressed thus²: *all that which exists, has a sufficient reason why it rather is than not*, and so too why it is thus and not otherwise. A *reason*, however, might be quite correctly defined, as it has been by the same celebrated Wolff,³ as that *from which it is cognized why something is*, or more specifically, why something rather is than not and why it is so rather than otherwise. A sufficient reason is one in which nothing is lacking for providing the reason for all the circumstances of a thing. One will occasionally find that the same notion had occurred to Leibniz in various places; on the contrary others, who have deviated from this notion without justification and seem to put forward an entirely new question, understand through *reason* anything by which a thing can be conceived, from which it would follow that any sort of cognition whatsoever, even if it should proceed from the barest experience a posteriori, would necessarily have to be counted among the reasons of a thing which is completely foreign to our usual manner of speaking. For example, if as I am looking into a mirror, I notice that Titius enters the study behind me, who will say that I thereby cognize a reason for Titius, or even for his presence and arrival?

§II. (*The principle is not aptly called the principle of "sufficient" reason.*) Yet the name of the principle of sufficient reason does not seem to me to be entirely suitable, though it is more than apt to confuse decent minds who easily allow themselves to be misled by the mildness of the word into believing that it would be unreasonable for someone not to grant that there was a sufficient reason for all things, so that nothing could be said to be more sensible than this postulate. For we are already so accustomed to using this term in a way that we also judge that to suffice as a reason for something else which is equally disposed to many other things at the same time, yet understood in this way a sufficient reason has a signification that is entirely contrary to the Leibnizian sense. For it was thus that Samuel Clarke, that most acute philosopher, thought the creation of the world in this or in that part of space and in this or that moment of eternity was not lacking a sufficient reason, one lying namely in the omnipotence and the decree of the divine will, even if the supreme Deity had been able to effect either under the very same circumstances. Obviously he had supposed that merely a true and simple sufficient reason was demanded by Leibniz, because once it is conceded to him, then it can no longer be understood why a reason, A,

¹ [Here Crusius refers to *Theodicy* Pt. I, §44 (*H* p. 147) and the "Monadology," §31 (*AG* p. 217).]

² *Ont.* §70. ³ *Ont.* §56.

which is now sufficient for an effect, B, could not at the same time and in the very same state be sufficient for effect C or D. How far removed, however, these consequences are from what Leibniz intends is attested by his repeated complaints regarding the misunderstanding of his principle.⁴

§III. (*The principle is more suitably called the principle of determining reason.*) Clarity will be better served, therefore, if we rather called that principle the principle of *determining reason*. For to *determine* means to suppose only one way of existing when it comes to how a thing either is or can be under the posited circumstances. For example, two lines and the angle between them determine the triangle; for, only a single determination of the third line as well as the nearby angles remains which, therefore, upon the assumption of the former, cannot fail to coincide with them. In just this way, any given Leibnizian reason, provided that it be sufficient, determines that thing whose reason it is called in such a way that under these posited circumstances it is able to exist or take place in only this way. So, from that reason it can be understood why something is and why it is thus. Yet, finite beings come to know the certainty of something, whatever it might be, from the falsity of what is opposed to it. Accordingly, from every sufficient reason it is necessary that it be understood why that which is opposed to it does not and cannot exist, as long namely as that reason is posited and the configuration of coexisting things does not change. Therefore, all of those things that are opposed are not even able to take place at that time, but only that is which is understood as having been grounded in this sufficient reason. Anything, then, that is or takes place is completely determined through its sufficient reason, and that very reason is its determining reason. Even though we note that the proponents of the Leibnizian philosophy, in seeking to commend their opinions, tend to make use of the term *sufficient reason*,⁵ nonetheless they clearly do not shy away from the designation of it as a *determining reason* but even recognize it as being apt for expressing what they intended.

§IV. (*This principle cannot be admitted except in a restricted sense.*) The principle of determining (or, if you prefer, sufficient) reason has met with such frequent approval, particularly on the part of men illustrious in the praise and reputation of their erudition, so that not only have they erected whole systems on its basis, and exalted its utility to the very skies, but they also behold all those with contempt, even judging them mentally unsound, mad, and spinners of fairy tales, who dare so much as to utter anything against that principle (it seems to me that the first of these can be excused but the latter is plainly shameful).⁶ For my part, I do not think it advisable to

⁴ See the correspondence between Leibniz and Clarke, *passim*; for example, Clarke's second letter (§1 [ALC p. 11]), Leibniz's third letter (§2 [ALC p. 14]), Clarke's third letter (§2 [ALC p. 18]), Leibniz's fifth letter (§§20, 21, 125, [ALC pp. 39–40, 64–5] etc.). [...]

⁵ [Here Crusius notes that Leibniz makes use of the phrase "determining reason" in *Theodicy* Pt. 1, §44 (H p. 147), and remarks that while Wolff rejects this term because it seems to carry a strict necessity with it, this amounts to a merely cosmetic difference as Wolff emphasizes the determining function of a sufficient reason in, for instance *Ont.* §118.]

⁶ See Wolff's *Ont.* §77, and Johann Gustav Reinbeck (*Betrachtungen über die in der Augsbургischen Confession enthaltene und damit verknüpfte Göttliche Wahrheiten*, 2 vols. [Berlin and Leipzig, 1733], vol. I, §13; p. 13), where he declares concerning this principle: "whoever would not admit it is not worthy of having another word wasted on him but rather deserves the place of honour in a mental institution."

simply deny that principle altogether, even though this could be done in a manner consistent with the truth, yet that principle stands very much in need of limits, which limits I will undertake to set shortly. For it could easily happen that, among those who have the tendency to judge hastily, one would incur suspicion, as if you disputed the wisdom and order of the series of causes and effects, or that you were about to introduce the fortuitous collisions of Epicurus' atoms or I know not what sort of senseless fantasy world. I will, therefore, exposit my own opinion more moderately; indeed, I only wish this, that this principle should not be admitted without careful restriction. I am going to give the rationale for this judgment in that I will demonstrate first that this principle, when it is not circumscribed by any limits, leads to very problematic conclusions, after which I will make it clear that it has not been demonstrated legitimately by the illustrious Wolff, and then, after having explicated the propositions that are comprehended by that principle, I will carefully fix its proper limits.

§V. (*For one introduces thereby the absolute necessity of all things.*) First, I will show that *an unavoidable and absolutely immutable necessity of all things that exist or take place is introduced* through this principle. That is necessary, the opposite of which cannot exist or, in the case of that which exists, is such that it cannot fail to exist, or in the case of that which occurs, is such that it cannot fail to take place or to take place in another way. Necessity is either hypothetical, which finds its ground at some point in conditions that are not themselves necessary, or absolute, which is constituted otherwise, and which is thus either always grounded in conditions that are equally necessary, or its opposite is such as cannot even be thought. I now offer the following argument: if anything that happens cannot take place otherwise except on the condition that it has a determining reason, then it follows that that which does not take place also cannot take place, for its determining reason is not at hand, or at the very least it is not at hand now, and so it cannot take place now. Yet, the same also holds for the reason of the reason, for the reason of that reason, for the 600th determining reason of the antecedent reasons, [etc.]. And as far as you might ascend, going as far back as you will, the same thing will hold for any being and state whatsoever; therefore, not only is any thing that presently exists necessary, since its opposite cannot take place, but the entire series of antecedent things is also driven by the same necessity. Accordingly, whatever happens occurs with an ineluctable and utterly absolute necessity. For example, Titius deceives Caius. The deception took place necessarily, for there is a determining reason on the basis of that which preceded and, contrariwise, there was no sufficient reason at hand that might determine Titius to honesty. But perhaps the fault lies in Titius himself, because he did not accustom his mind, at some previous time, to the practice of virtue? I respond: how could one have accustomed oneself to be any other way than one actually is? For, each antecedent state of the mind is likewise produced through a determining reason which has made it so that it is thus and not otherwise. If, therefore, the series of antecedent reasons was supposed to be arranged otherwise

[J. G. Reinbeck (1683–1741), was a theologian and supporter of Wolff, who as part of an investigative commission recommended overturning the ban on teaching Wolff's textbooks.]

at some point, then another world would have had to have been made. But no other world could be made, since God had a determining reason why He made this one and not another; therefore, Titius' act of deception took place with absolute necessity.

§VI. (*Elucidation.*) I think it is sufficiently evident that what is alleged by others, namely, that absolute necessity is to be conceived such that its opposite implies a contradiction, is without any foundation. For from this one could conclude that the deception in our example is not necessary since nothing contradictory is met with in the notion of a human being who does not deceive another. What difference does it make on this score if the opposite considered separately permits of being thought and yet its possibility or actual existence cannot be thought on account of those circumstances under which it is supposed to exist? Indeed, it is necessary, according to their opinion, that "Titius does not deceive Caius"⁷ contains a contradiction, for Titius' honesty or omission of any deception would be something that takes place without a sufficient reason, yet do they not boastfully proclaim that it is contradictory for something to take place without a determining reason? One can think of a human being without deception, but one cannot think Titius as such since, when one thinks of Titius, one thinks of such a subject in which deception has a determining reason and honesty does not. I could with equal right assert that an equilateral figure inscribed within a circle can have unequal angles. There is, namely, nothing contradictory in an equilateral figure consisting of unequal angles; nevertheless, a contradiction is implied under the stipulated conditions because it contradicts the other circumstances that are assumed to obtain at the same time, since one supposes the figure to be inscribed in a circle. Now let us apply this case to our previous example. Is it not clear that honesty does not in fact contradict human nature, considered generally, but does oppose Titius' nature since a determining reason for deception is supposed to be in it and, in addition to this, it is assumed that whatever takes place has a determining reason? Absolute necessity can, in truth, be divided further into immediate and mediate, with the first occurring where the opposed condition, considered on its own, cannot be thought at all, but with the second occurring where the opposed condition cannot be thought in the conjunction of things which are assumed as truly necessary. When, however, the question concerns the general concept, namely the nature of absolute necessity in general, this distinction is not at all relevant, and it does not make any difference when it comes to the conclusions that follow from the nature of the general concept.

§VII. (*One introduces fate thereby.*) When I consider this more carefully, I find that those critics have not argued badly who have objected that, through the principle of determining reason, fate is introduced as it were through the back door. For fate consists in the immutable implication of all things. But perhaps a distinction would be made between a blind and a seeing fate: that is, a blind fate would be one where that entanglement would not be known by anyone, not even by the divine intellect itself or, if you prefer, one where in the series of connected causes the

⁷ [Oddly, Crusius here provides the sentence "Caius does not deceive Titius," which changes the deceiver and deceived from the original example in §V. To avoid confusion, however, I have changed it to a negation of the original sentence and have substituted "Titius" for "Caius" throughout the remainder of the section.]

well even without His command, since the determining reason has already been set in the immutable nature of those things. Is such a command, then, any more rational than if, with a profound and serious countenance, one should command the stone which one throws into the river to seek the bottom, or if, seeing the rain, one should attempt to impress upon the drops the injunction that they better beware that they not move upwards because they are required to fall to the earth? Yet, in this case does not God's justice blame the innocent? Does God's justice not then punish people because they have omitted those things the performance of which contradicted the nature of the individual, the nature of the world, or indeed even the nature of God who could not have created this world unless it were the best; conversely, are they to be punished because they perform that action the omission of which opposed the interconnection of all things? Surely, virtue would have to be counted as nothing more than good fortune, and evil as bad. All this is admitted without obscurity by Leibniz,⁸ a most discerning man and one who was thoroughly mindful of his principles, although his followers either are not as forthright in advancing them or, as I prefer to think, they are not profound enough in following the principles of their teacher. Yet what learned person will advance conclusions of this sort, or support them by giving them his approbation? Who will allow their freedom of will to be snatched away by an imaginary principle, when one is aware of this freedom through the testimony of experience, and truly the touchstone of all abstract cognition is agreement with experience.

§X. (*It is not proven.*) In my judgment, it is hardly worth the cost of sacrificing the doctrine of morality, through the proper teaching and application of which human happiness and all of religion are sustained, for the principle of sufficient reason, a recently invented principle and one which has not even been demonstrated. Indeed, that Leibniz did not even venture to demonstrate this principle is abundantly confirmed by his writings.⁹ The famous Wolff, that most successful propagator of the Leibnizian philosophy, has taken up this office. However, whether he has discharged this task successfully is something to examine a little more carefully, with the permission of that illustrious man. For such could not possibly displease one who has so often declared that he has set no other aim for himself than to promote the cognition of truth and the happiness of humankind.

§XI. (*Wolff's first demonstration is refuted.*) In fact, we find two proofs of the principle of determining reason furnished by the celebrated Wolff in his *German*

⁸ [Crusius appends this footnote to the previous sentence, but it is more appropriately placed here.] See *Theodicy*, Pt. I, §§67–75 [H pp. 159–63] where Leibniz does not deny that punishment is inflicted upon the sinner without guilt, only excusing this by means of using another name, and where he confuses the praise that follows from the imputation of a praiseworthy deed with other forms of praise, and does not admit the former (§75).

⁹ Leibniz either appeals to examples, concerning which see below §XV, or the demonstration is based upon the fact that in general no example of the contrary can be given where the possibility would not remain that one has just not discerned the determining reasons. Yet, this does not amount to a demonstration because this is to infer from what could be the case to what is the case; alternatively, he alleges that it is not possible to uphold the existence of God and His so-called middle knowledge without that principle, although that is both false and, even if one were to concede everything to him, this would still be nothing else than to argue in an *ad hominem* fashion. One might consult a number of Leibniz's works, for example *Theodicy*, Pt. I §44 [H p. 147–8] and the fifth letter to Clarke, §129 [ALC p. 65].

what amounts to the same thing, that Nothing is its sufficient reason; but rather denies in general that it is required that A is on account of something else. He wants, then, for it to be proved that when something is supposed to be, it must be supposed to be on account of something else from which it is understood why it is. For one could either simply assume that A exists, or this could be known a posteriori, and so one can suppose its existence without absurdity. And since he does not further suppose that Nothing has brought A about but merely doubts whether in general it was brought forth or had need of being produced from something else, he likewise asserts nothing contradictory here and, consequently, the principle of sufficient reason is not yet proven. For, assume that A is Nothing, B is a being, and C its sufficient reason. The illustrious Wolff says that when B is supposed C is as well because otherwise it would be supposed that C and A are one and the same, which would be absurd. But now the reply to this is that no such claim is made by any opponent, but only that B is supposed and C is not.

§XIII. (*The other proof is refuted.*) The illustrious Wolff's other demonstration is in §31 of the *German Metaphysics*, of which this is the core:

Whoever says that something is at once the same and not the same, says something impossible.

Yet, he who denies the principle of determining reason says that something is at once the same and not the same.

Therefore, he says something impossible, and as a consequence this principle is certain.

The minor is proved in the following way: if we suppose A and B are the same and that something can come to be without a sufficient reason, then a change can come to be in A which would not come to be in B were it to be put in its place. Therefore, A and B are at once the same and not the same. Here it is supposed that whoever denies the principle of sufficient reason thereby asserts, of anything and wherever it may be, and thus even concerning those things which are the same, that they could come to be without a determining reason, notwithstanding that he would be able to affirm that it would only be possible for something to come to be without a determining reason in certain substances; thus, again, an inference is made from the negation of a proposition to the supposition of some proposition that is merely contrary rather than one that is strictly opposed to it. But I will grant this point for the sake of the dispute, since the argument does not even proceed correctly from there. For I question whether the illustrious author is speaking of perfect identity, which is the representation of some thing under a two-fold notion, or only of a perfect similarity? In the former case, A and B will be two names or two representations of one thing. Therefore, he who says that a change in one comes to be without a determining reason, will never say that it comes to be in A but does not in B, but rather will assert that it comes to be in that thing and is in it, whether that thing is conceived through the notion A or through B, on account of which this illustrious author does not at all land a blow on his opponents. Conceive of Cicero under two names: call him Marcus and Tully; thus, Marcus and Tully will be the same. Now,

§XV. (*That it is also not proven through examples.*) Much less, however, is it possible to prove the principle of determining reason through examples. For no universal proposition is demonstrated through examples but at most one can contend that it must be postulated on account of the multitude of examples, other things being equal, which is also the path followed by Leibniz. Even if one adduces a reason for human actions, how does one establish that it would have been a determining reason? This cannot be soundly inferred from the fact that the effect follows since in this way one already presupposes the truth of the very principle at issue. On account of this, one must wonder how the illustrious Wolff could have claimed that his principle is already sufficiently demonstrated because the distinction between dream and truth, as well as between the actual world and a fantasy world, can be explained by it.¹³ Now even if the celebrated man had actually shown this, nevertheless the universal truth of his principle would not then have been established. For, it is often accidentally the case that some truth can be explained on the basis of a false proposition. Perhaps some part of this principle only agrees with the truth, and so that having removed all of the superfluities, it alone would suffice to elicit the same, true conclusion.

§XVI. (*The principle is ambiguous, first, due to the ambiguity of the word "reason."*) I have shown, therefore, that the principle of determining reason, in the form in which it was expressed by Leibniz, cannot be admitted as true, partly because it has not been demonstrated (§§XI–XIII), partly because it cannot be demonstrated (§§XIV–XV), and partly because the highly false consequences which are legitimately derived from it more than suffice to reveal subsequently its deviation from the truth (§§V, VII–IX). Beyond this, however, the principle suffers from a notable ambiguity, as a result of which it is rendered overly pliable and even uncertain in its application. For, first, the word *reason* is slippery. Since a reason is that from which it is cognized why something is, Leibniz in fact comprehends under it both principles¹⁴ of cognition and of things, that is, principles of cognition a priori, including purely ideal principles, in addition to active causes and the remaining sort of determining principles which determine another thing to be in a certain way merely through their existence and not through some activity; indeed, he even includes ends, laws and rules of prudence among reasons. How so? Moreover, how is it that a reason is sometimes something different from that of which it is called the reason, and other times it is taken to pertain to that same thing, as when that thing is said to have the reason in itself? You tell me that some being A has a sufficient reason. I ask: what sort

¹³ See *German Metaphysics*, §30. For this reason as well, what he expressly says in *Ontology* §73 also cannot be sustained: *the principle of sufficient reason can be abstracted as universal from examples or singular things*. He quotes an example produced from mathematics where it seems the principle of sufficient reason is presupposed by it. But, unless one wants to give license to anyone in concluding from the particular to the universal, then rules must be established to serve as conditions under which a universal proposition can be abstracted from a single example. [...] However, in demonstrative reasoning, the rule can be none other than that *similar adequate causes produce a similar effect*. But since this rule acquires its truth from a certain part of the principle of sufficient reason (a part that no doubt accords with the truth), so it cannot be applied to establishing the same principle without circularity. [...]

¹⁴ [Here, and in a number of instances below, Crusius uses "*principium*" rather than "*ratio*"; however, as he makes clear below (cf. §XXXIV), he takes these terms to be synonymous in some cases.]

of sufficient reason? Is it within A or outside of A? An efficient cause or merely ideal principle of cognizing? Is it physical or moral? You cannot leave it wholly up to me to choose among these as I please, as I will illustrate with several examples below (§XL). I do not know, then, which sort of reason you intend. You say that we must investigate and see what sort it is. Correct, but then I will make use of a more specialized principle, yet to be discovered, and not your principle of sufficient reason.

§XVII. (*The principle is ambiguous, second, due to the ambiguity of the word "sufficient."*) The word *sufficient* suffers from the same ambiguity which, even though it might be cleverly employed in a way that does not agree with the notion had by most who hear it, as I have shown above (§II), nonetheless if the word is accepted in the most precise sense possible, it can still be understood in terms of either a physically sufficient reason or a morally sufficient reason, which signification you will see indiscriminately extended everywhere. For instance, if you want to confute someone who locates the freedom of the will in a faculty for determining itself to different actions under the same posited circumstances, that is, in a sort of activity which does not stand in need of a physically determining reason in order to issue in a secondary action, you can object that he defends a will that acts without a sufficient reason. Here, many will have a morally sufficient reason in mind, and since the opposite of acting in accordance with such a reason is rashness and foolishness, they will think that you reproach your adversary with a serious charge, though how philosophically sound this may be, those who have some acquaintance with logic may judge. For, someone who defends a will that can act foolishly, affirms nothing that is not confirmed by experience, but to be sure he does not endorse a will for which it is permitted to act foolishly, or which must so act.

§XVIII. (*Refutation of doubts.*) But perhaps someone will conclude that all general concepts can be charged with ambiguity with the same right inasmuch as they comprehend various species under them. Hence, I see that many become thoroughly vexed when one imputes a fallacy of equivocation to the principle of determining reason on account of the various sorts of reasons there are. How is it, then, they might answer, that some take it to be a virtue of this principle that it extends so broadly and that it encompasses various species of reasons? I respond: the ambiguity at issue is an uncertainty in application, whereby it agrees with words in such a way that one cannot understand which meaning is to be attributed to them in a given instance. However, notions are ambiguous when it cannot be understood how they should apply to determinate examples, where a concept should always be serviceable for such determination.¹⁵ *Therefore, not all general concepts are ambiguous, nor am I charging the principle of sufficient reason with ambiguity merely because it is general. Those general concepts, however, become ambiguous which do not agree with its species in the same sense and on the same basis.* Indeed, concepts of this sort either cannot be applied securely at all, or they are to be divided up and, when they are applied to an example, the appropriate species must be named, for instance, the concept of animal agrees with all of its species in the very same sense and on the very

¹⁵ [See *Weg zur Gewißheit*, §215 where Crusius recommends, as a test for discovering the ambiguity of a word, that the concrete idea of the word's signification "is applied to as many examples as possible, in order to see whether they can all be called by a single name for the sake of showing that it is the same concept."]

principle springs forth: *that whose non-existence can be thought did not exist at some point*. Those who are fond of technical terms have my permission to call this the *principle of contingency*. To this you might easily add a third, namely, the *principle of necessity*: *no being is necessary unless its non-existence cannot be thought*.

§XXII. (*Proposition IV.*) If one now posits certain things as existing, then everything that exists at the same time or that comes to be cannot be composed in any other way than the laws of truth allow, namely, that they do not contradict those things now posited as existing. And in this way, even without a faculty of acting but merely through its existence which is now presupposed, an existing thing makes it that some other thing is possible or impossible, or only possible under certain conditions. Such a being which, merely through its existence makes something else possible or impossible, or simply possible in a certain respect I will call an *existentially determining principle or reason*, regarding which you might consider this rule which is supported by the principle of contradiction: *nothing is or can come to be except insofar as it does not contradict those co-existing things which are posited at the same time*. For example, the unequal lengths of the sides in the triangle are the cause as to why the angles cannot be equal, and vice versa.

§XXIII. (*What a faculty is and how many there might be, and what action, effect, and first action is.*) An efficient cause, when it produces something, must be equipped with a faculty (§XX). *Faculty* is the possibility of some thing that is thought, which is connected with another subject. This consists either in the fact that the thing whose truth is posited determines the possibility of other things merely by means of its existence (§XXII). Not knowing what else to call this, I will refer to it as the *existential faculty* for the time being. Alternatively, it consists in the internal quality of the essence of the thing, in which case it is called the *active faculty*. An *action* however is that state of an active faculty in which that takes place which is required for the existence of that thing that is the namesake of the faculty; or where it transfers that which it can transfer to a being that is possible through it. An *effect* is that which is produced through the action, and is distinct from the subject or from some quality in it. Therefore, there is an action between the effect and the active efficient cause, without which it would be absurd for an effect to come to be. That action situated between the cause and effect is often the effect of some other action, in such a way that in one respect it is an action but, in another respect, the same thing is to be numbered among effects. Since, however, this series cannot progress infinitely, it must at some point come to *first actions* which are not efficiently produced by any other thing, although they can be bound by their own conditions which are therefore immediately set out by the acting subject and are to be found in it. A first action, therefore, is that which does not have another efficient antecedent cause, and to be numbered among such actions are, for instance, all the actions of God, and the actions of the fundamental faculties in the elements and finite spirits.

§XXIV. (*First actions either take place perpetually...*) If, however, you have occasion to direct your thoughts to the character of first actions a little more carefully, you will discern with little trouble that these are of two sorts. *Some, namely, constantly take place, and some do not take place constantly*. Those which do constantly take place make up the internal essence of simple substances. Of this sort are, for instance, the actions of the divine intellect and, indeed, all of the

§XXVII. (*The genesis of the cognition of truth from the highest principles of human reason.*) Truth is the agreement of thoughts with things.¹⁹ However, no other natural *criterion of truth* can be established apart from the *nature of the intellect* itself, or *what can be thought*, which is not to say that whatever can be thought is true, but rather in this way that *whatever cannot be thought is false and, contrariwise, whatever cannot be thought as false is true*. And indeed some things cannot be thought since they involve a contradiction, such as that a triangle does not have angles; and in other cases, it is not possible to show that there is a contradiction but it suffices that they cannot be thought and so, unless some further condition is added as will be explained later (§XXVIII), they should be rejected as no less false and absurd, such as that there is a faculty without a subject, or vice versa, or that something comes to be without an efficient cause, or that two pieces of matter penetrate one another at an indivisible point, or that one person can be in Leipzig and Dresden simultaneously. Nevertheless, we must always keep in mind that we are finite, on account of which our efforts in judging what is true *are not to be extended beyond the nature of the finite*. That judgment where we reject contradicting things as false gives rise to two identical propositions, namely, that whatever is is, and whatever is not is not, which we usually join together into a single proposition: nothing can both be and not be at the same time in the same sense, and we call this the principle of contradiction. But everything else which cannot be thought is equally to be rejected, and is in fact rejected by us as we are compelled to do so.

(*The highest principles of human reason.*) As a result, from the nature of the human intellect, according to which that which is unable to be thought is rejected as false, there flows three general principles for the cognition of truth, of which the first is: *nothing can both be and not be at the same time in the same sense*, that is, the *principle of contradiction*. The *second* is: *that which cannot be separated in thought, cannot be separated in fact, even if no contradiction comes about, as long as both are positive*, for instance: nothing comes to be without an efficient cause. Provided no fault is found with the term, one might call it the *principle of the inseparable*. I would like it to be well noted that I have required that both of the propositions that are thought as inseparable are positive, for otherwise we would not be mindful of our finitude by which it happens that whatever we think positively we can conceive in no other way than, and only so long as we think it as, limited; thus, in thinking of the infinite being, we necessarily have to attach something negative to our concept.²⁰ The *third* principle is: *those things which we cannot combine in thought, cannot be combined in fact, even where a contradiction does not arise*, which if you want a name you might call the *principle of the incombable*. All of the rules of reasoning in logic as well as the truth of axioms and experiences are, or can be, derived from these three principles, and indeed as far as I can see, they are derived by means of the easiest and most natural connection.

¹⁹ [Compare Thomasius, *Introduction to the Doctrine of Reason*, Fifth Main Part, proposition 13, above.]

²⁰ [Compare *Weg zur Gewißheit*, §263: "on account of our finitude, we cannot think everything and our intuitive cognition does not stretch very far; therefore we must not assume that we are justified in holding that we might reject everything that is inconceivable to us."]

§XXVIII. (*Rules for the conflict of the highest principles.*) It happens occasionally that something that is correctly derived from the second or third principle opposes that which is elicited from the principle of contradiction, on account of which it is concluded that one or the other of these is contrary to the truth. But this is easily resolved, as one need only have recourse to the general criterion of truth. One must determine, namely, the proposition whose falsity least permits of being thought. Now, however, it is possible to conceive that there is an intellect more perfect than our own, which can combine and separate that whose combination or separation does not lie within our power; yet, it is inconsistent with all thought that there could be an intellect which could think contradictory things as true. It is, therefore, clear that *in the case of a conflict, the principle of contradiction is, with the most complete conviction and certainty, to be given priority over the other two principles.* However, in other examples where these principles do not conflict, if one wanted to withhold assent to these latter two principles, that would in fact be nothing else but to oppose nature itself and, having abandoned the innate nature of the intellect, to grasp after smoke and shadows.

(*Mysteries of reason.*) Otherwise, one could call those things *mysteries of reason* that oppose the latter principles but which, on account of a proof taken from the principle of contradiction, indisputably make their own truth clear and, at the same time, affirm the limitation of our intellect. Concerning these things, we know that they are true, but we do not know the manner in which they are established nor the determinate possibility as to how they are capable of being combined and separated.

§XXIX. (*Proposition VI.*) From these considerations, the generation of true cognition, and how it can be distinguished from error, is sufficiently evident. Truth, namely, can admit no other criterion than the agreement with the principles of human reason, and error the disagreement with these principles, unless perhaps you are afraid that God has arranged the nature of our intellect for our perpetual deceit, which however would be foolish and impious. In this way, we have brought forth a new rule: *the human intellect judges nothing to be true except on account of the clearly or obscurely perceived connection with these three highest principles (or at least which we imagine to perceive in this way).* I suggest that this rule might be called the *rule of conviction*. [...]

§XXXIV. (*Exposition of the types of reasons: of physical and moral existence.*) [...] Let *principle* and *reason* be taken as synonyms.²¹ A principle therefore is something that is prior, or that is considered as such, and which contributes something either to the existence or the possibility of some other being which is later or considered as such. [...] Nonetheless, it must be noted that a principle is either prior temporally or only in regard to the manner of consideration, and also that something is contributed either to the being's complete existence or to its possibility, and so to a part of its existence. Existence is either physical, when something actually exists, or moral, when something ought to be. Similarly, possibility is also either physical, where some thing that is thought is grounded in some cause, or moral, where some act is

²¹ [Accordingly, and despite the risk of confusion, Crusius uses *principium* and *ratio* fairly interchangeably through the next few sections.]

permitted and not prohibited by any law. Wherefore, a principle will be either a *principle of physical existence*, which makes it that something physically is or can be, as for example the sun is the principle of light, or a *principle of moral existence*, which makes it that something must come to be or is permitted to do so, as for instance the avoidance of an imminent danger is the reason why one proceeds with caution.

§XXXV. (*Principle of being and of cognizing.*) A *reason of physical existence* is such either with respect to the thing itself outside of the intellect, and this is called the reason of the thing or the *principle of being* as, for instance, God is the reason of the world; or with respect to our cognition, insofar namely as it produces the cognition of another thing, as for instance the supreme perfection of God is the reason why He exists eternally and can so exist, and this is called the *principle of cognizing*.

§XXXVI. (*Efficient cause and existentially determining principle.*) A *principle of being* either produces its effect by means of an active faculty and its use, in which case it is called an *efficient cause* and the rules for which one can find at §§XX, XXI, XXVI, as for instance heat is among the causes for the growth of plants; or, it makes something else possible, or impossible or possible in no other way, through nothing more than its mere existence, and this I have called an *existentially determining principle*, of which sort are all the determining quantities in the whole of mathematics, and the rules for which one can find in §XXII.

§XXXVII. (*Various principles of cognizing.*) A *principle of cognizing* is either a posteriori or a priori. Yet, a principle that is called a priori can be so *merely ideally*, as for instance a definition is the principle of [, or the reason of knowing,] the attributes of something; or it can be ideal and real, or a *principle of cognizing and of being at once*. For, from every principle of being which, and insofar as it, does not act freely, the certainty and state of the effect can be foreseen (§§III, XXVI). Freely acting causes, however, do not serve to that extent as a reason for foreseeing the existence and circumstances of their actions a priori; nevertheless, the possibility of their actions can be known from them. The rules concerning principles of cognizing can be found in §§XXVII–XXXII.²²

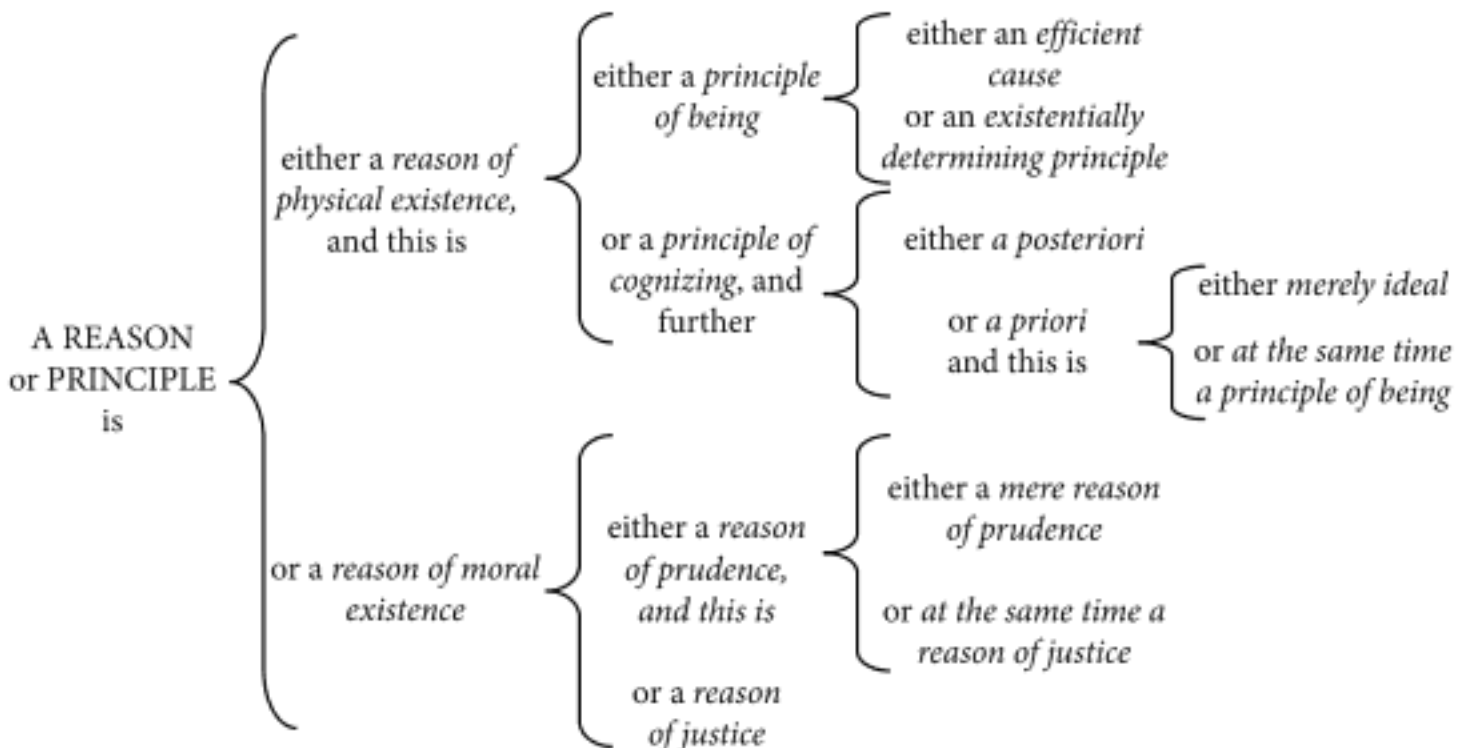
§XXXIX. (*What a reason considered subjectively and objectively is, and what a cause is.*) I admit that much still could have been added concerning causes and reasons. However, my intention was to gather from the limitless region of causal abstractions no more than would suffice in order to properly understand and suitably limit the Leibnizian principle of determining reason. Nonetheless, I will provide one more consideration which should not simply be passed over without attention. Some have pointed out that a reason can be considered subjectively or objectively. Namely, a reason considered *objectively* is that notion from which it can be known why the thing we are inquiring about is; that subject, however, in which the object of that notion is encountered is called the reason *subjectively* considered. I consent readily to all this, but the matter seems to be attended by a few difficulties. That many call a reason, subjectively considered, a cause is something I could scarcely be in accord with. For although the word *cause* is employed multifariously in ordinary discourse,

²² [In the next (omitted) section (§XXXVIII), Crusius considers a reason of “moral existence [*existentiae moralis*],” distinguishing these into reasons of prudence, which are given by the idea of human perfection and the nature of our purpose, and reasons of justice, which stem from a law considered as such.]

and so the right to determine its signification may not seem to be denied the philosopher, nonetheless, the term seems to be used here far too freely. This is because we never call the principles of cognizing, insofar as they are such, the cause of something even though they are as it were the causes of our cognizing something. [...] I would think therefore that, even though cause is often taken as a synonym of reason, we would do best to call a *cause* the being which contains the principle of being of some other thing for which a cause is sought. If, therefore, the cause is a whole being, then it is always a substance; all causes are thus substances, or actions and modifications of substances.²³

§XL. (*The ambiguity of the principle of sufficient reason when one does not infer it from the more specific propositions.*) Thus far, I have derived nine propositions, each true and of highest importance, which are comprehended under the Leibnizian principle of sufficient reason [...²⁴]. And even if nothing more were contained in the principle than these propositions, and so the principle were to accord exactly with the truth (though it will soon become apparent that things are otherwise), nonetheless, those who commend the principle of sufficient reason to us with so much effort are not to be praised as having conducted the matter well. For one could not understand these specific propositions, whichever one might be called upon here and there in support, from the principle itself. Moreover, even by the admission of its defenders, it is not satisfactory for the principle itself that one is able to cite some species of sufficient reason or another; rather, considerations such as we have entered into here should be adduced and hence we should always reason from those specific

²³ As an aid to memory, take the following tree of divisions presented in tabular form:



²⁴ [The remaining propositions Crusius derives from the principle of sufficient reason in the sections omitted here all relate to morally sufficient reasons. These are: (seventh proposition) *the truth ought to be sought, and the obstacles to attaining it must be carefully removed* (cf. § XXX); (eighth proposition) *one should not act other than in agreement with reason and the law, or prudently and justly* (cf. § XXXI); and the ninth proposition is identified as the principle of morally sufficient reason which consists in the general precept “nothing is to be taken for granted or performed without a sufficient reason” (cf. § XXXII).]

propositions that we have explicated. Yet, if one must infer from these, then why, I ask, does one exalt the principle of determining reason with such praise when that principle does not permit of any distinguished use, or only a completely trifling one, in the sciences? So that this might be clearer, I will supply some examples from which it will become apparent how ambiguous and lacking in characteristic features that principle is.

Spinoza rejected God, but that the world has a sufficient reason is not gainsaid as its reason lies in itself. Evidently, he understood this to be a merely ideal, a priori principle of cognizing, for he deduced the necessity of the world from the concept of a substance, a deduction with which some who do not teach the method of demonstrating definitions in their logic, or who deny that real conclusions do not follow from possible definitions, would wish to find fault (though I do not see why). Imagine the gods of Epicurus, not of course as creators of the world but as lazy spectators, in the dull intermundial space, of this accidentally aggregated world. Yet because these gods enjoy a superior understanding, and know well enough the accidental declination or swerve of atoms by which our universe was eventually brought forth, do they then not have within them something from which it can be cognized why the world is, and so contain in themselves a sufficient reason for the world? For were it permitted us to examine their intellect, we would be able to understand thereby why the world is, which is to say they contain within themselves the principle of cognizing the world. Likewise, when those who embrace the pre-established harmony claim that the sufficient reason for the changes of the body is no less contained in the soul, and the sufficient reason for the changes of the soul no less in the body; even though neither part acts upon the other yet each at least contains something in it from which it can be cognized why this or that occurs in such a way in the one and not otherwise. By the same token, are not Epicurus' gods able to have within themselves the sufficient reason of the world since from them it can be understood why the world is? Imagine the world to have existed eternally, and imagine a soul of the world, an informing form, an assisting being, a Stoic, Aristotelian, or Platonic god: in each of these cases it could be said with equal justification that the world has its sufficient reason in god. Is it not clear, therefore, that the Leibnizian principle of sufficient reason is of no use in demonstrating the existence of God, properly speaking, on account of that principle's lack of characteristic features and its extreme pliability, and that recourse must instead be made to the principles I have supplied in §§XX–XXI [...].

§XLI. (*Proposition X from the principle of sufficient reason, which proposition is false.*) Yet, besides the nine propositions that have been explicated, another proposition is also comprehended by the principle of sufficient reason which accounts for that part of the principle which is false. This part is clearly incapable of support and it is from it that all of those troublesome conclusions which I have treated in §§V–IX are drawn. According to this proposition, two things are affirmed at once, namely, *that every active cause is determined to act, and to act in just such a way and no other, such that the action could not be omitted or directed otherwise under the same circumstances.* For, since the sufficient reason is that from which it is understood why something rather is than not, and why it is such and not otherwise, so the same

will hold for the reason that determines the active cause. Now, however, one cannot gather the truth of anything by means of inference except from demonstrating the impossibility of the strictly opposed proposition. Therefore, when something is at hand from which we can see why this thing is rather than something else, then we also understand why the latter could not come to be. As a result, the active cause is only disposed at that moment to no more than a single determinate action which it can now undertake (§III). Just as we observe in machines that a given machine is disposed to bringing about various effects, but in such a way that each takes place under particular conditions such that, when they are present, that effect cannot be omitted and, when they are absent, it cannot be undertaken; so the reason of every active cause is supposed to be constituted in a similar way. One sees the heavier scalepan descending, which could also have risen but only with the positing of different circumstances; one sees the same sky, though it casts down hail or sprinkles rain. But each one, although possible in itself, does not actually take place without a completely determining reason that at the same time excludes the opposite. In the same way, God and spirits are supposed to be determined to all of their actions, which are yet called free since their determining reasons are distinct notions,²⁵ although they do not differ as far as necessity is concerned. They think up different names for them, but this does not alter anything in the matter itself. For, they believe that bodies are determined by the laws of motion and spirits, by contrast, are determined by ethico-logical laws, but they are nevertheless just as determined. Yet, this opinion is not proved since I have shown that the principle of determining reason has not been demonstrated, §§XI–XIII, and also that it cannot be proven, §§XIV–XV, since on the contrary both the possibility and the truth of such acting causes have been in part directly, §XXV, and indirectly, §§V–IX, demonstrated. The assent, therefore, that tends to be given to this tenth proposition will be derived from the sort of causes which we have supplied in §XIX, and one should keep in mind how inconsequential and far from the truth such causes are. *Those actions, therefore, are to be exempted from that complete determination, insofar, namely, as they are free* (I want this to be well noted). And since the chief part of philosophy consists in explaining and directing such actions, it is sufficiently clear that no insignificant error lies in the Leibnizian principle of determining reason given that it handles the noblest object of philosophy so badly, but also mistreats religion, which depends on philosophy precisely here.

§XLII. (*Free actions must be cognized a posteriori, or through an infinite intellect.*) Since the Leibnizian principle asserts that an a priori reason can be given for anything, it deviates from the truth in that it also supposes all active causes to be constituted in such a way that it is possible for the effect to be foreseen from them a priori. Yet, I have shown that free actions are to be exempted here. For, even though we might eagerly wish to explain such actions on the basis of a determining reason, §XVIII,²⁶ and so continually strive in vain to find an explanation, yet the nature of the thing itself is not affected and instead only forces us to recognize the limits of our intellect

²⁵ [On this, see Wolff's *German Metaphysics*, §514, and Leibniz's *Theodicy*, Pt. III, §§288–9 (*H* pp. 303–4).]

²⁶ [This is likely a reference to §XIX, not §XVIII.]

and, when it comes to explicating this faculty which constitutes the noblest aspect of our likeness with the infinite supreme being, to be content with a posteriori cognition. For, free actions cannot be foreseen by the finite intellect other than as probable, since they are bereft of determining reasons. When, therefore, such actions take place, they must be known a posteriori since knowing in advance that they will occur requires an infinite intellect, which obviously does not need to make use of inferences but, by means of His nature, always and necessarily and at every moment most perfectly and clearly knows all things that are and that occur, as well as what would have occurred under other conditions.

§XLIII. (*Divine foreknowledge does not require inferences.*) If you were to believe all that concerning the highest Deity which His altogether supreme perfection requires us to believe, then one will form a notion of His foreknowledge that is worthy of so great a God. Nonetheless, Leibniz offered a poor vindication of this divine attribute,²⁷ as he considers God to have foreknowledge of future matters from their determining reasons, and for the rest he baldly confesses that foreknowledge of this kind must be regarded as absurd unless it is not conceived on the basis of his own fabricated system. Yet is this not to yield to the Socinians, and indeed, without any reason? Socinians deny the foreknowledge of free actions, but their opinion concerning freedom is correct; Leibniz would not be a Socinian in this particular matter and so he preferred to adopt an incorrect conception of freedom and thus affirmed the foreknowledge of human actions which are not truly free—is this not, I ask, as much as to reject the very foreknowledge of God into which we were originally inquiring? Moreover, in this way, a subtle anthropomorphism could be introduced which would affix to God those things that are consequences of human finitude. For, the capacity to reason must be removed from the divine intellect no less than the capacity to sense, as both betray a finitude and a merely gradual increase of cognition that are thoroughly unbecoming of infinite majesty. Accordingly, it should not be said that God knows future matters on the basis of their reasons, but rather that He knows future matters and he also knows the reasons by which these are brought about and, insofar as they are connected by these reasons. It does not trouble me if one should object that it is not possible to comprehend God's foreknowledge in this way; I rather opt for the contrary opinion that the foreknowledge of an infinite being that would not surpass the limits of our intellect is certainly false precisely on account of the fact that it can be comprehended. For, the internal nature of an infinite being cannot be comprehensible to any being outside of an infinite intellect. A mystery of reason is therefore to be acknowledged here, one indisputably sustained by its certainty, even if there is no way in which we might gain distinct cognition of it, the reason for which was given before (cf. §XXVIII).

§XLIV. (*Limitation of the principle of sufficient reason.*) At last, we are now in a position where my opinion concerning the Leibnizian principle of determining reason, and my views concerning its limitation and improvement, can be sufficiently understood. I consider myself correct, namely, in presuming that a principle of such a sort is sought which can prove useful especially in natural theology and in the

²⁷ See *Theodicy*, Pt. I, §§39–42 [*H* pp. 144–7], and Leibniz's fifth letter to Clarke, §5 [*ALC* p. 36] [...].

mathematical and physical sciences. [...] What I have called the principle of sufficient cause (§XX) and of determining reason (§XXVI) can be aptly comprehended within a single rule (though whether this rule would answer to Leibniz's aim to the extent that it is deserving of our approbation, the readers can judge for themselves). The rule itself will be this: *everything the non-existence of which can be conceived comes to be from a sufficient cause and, if it was not a free action, then it came to be from that cause in such a way that it could not fail to come to be or take place otherwise under the posited circumstances*. A sufficient cause is one in which there is nothing lacking that is required for the effect. Whether this revision is in other respects pleasing to the reader is not of great concern to me so long as he is in accord with me concerning the explication of the specific propositions contained in the principle of sufficient reason, with which we were so extensively occupied above, since these propositions are the true limits of that principle. For the rest, it must be left wholly to each learned individual to order his thoughts as he pleases and to set the appropriate boundaries for his concepts, provided that no harm to the truth results.

§XLV. (*Free actions truly have a sufficient reason.*) In free actions, therefore, a sufficient reason in the sense that I assign to the word finds a place, namely there is merely a *sufficient* cause, but not one that beyond this is also *determined to only a single way of acting*. For a free substance, when it acts freely, is provided with sufficient powers for an action but insofar as it acts freely it is no less provided with powers sufficient to omit that action. That which it undertakes to do does not exceed its powers, and so powers sufficient for it were at hand; however, at the same time there were a number of other actions for the undertaking of which those powers were no less sufficient. I walk, but I can sit; I sit but I can walk. Both are in my power, and I do not stand in need of a new determining reason to do either but rather I determine myself. Certainly, objects I encounter move me but, if I should not wish to act in accordance with them, I resist their impulses as long as this does not exceed my limited powers. Thus, I am not determined. And when I am determined, the cause behind this is that I did not make use of my freedom. If I devote myself to virtue, then I choose what is best. However, since I could still renounce the greater good and choose the lesser, one will still offer me praise if I will have chosen the better. In this way, we easily avoid the aspersions of our opponents when they mock us by saying that the free will, according to our opinion, acts without a sufficient reason, for there is a sufficient reason of physical existence. [...]

§XLVII. (*It is not the case that whoever asks after reasons for things presupposes the principle of sufficient reason.*) All those judge precipitously who suppose that anyone who speaks of reasons, or who seeks after causes and reasons, makes a tacit inference from, or otherwise presupposes, the Leibnizian principle. For why can they not presuppose another of our rules? Indeed, some have done just this, and because they were convinced that the very same thing which they presupposed was contained in the Leibnizian principle, they have often affirmed this principle though not in the sense Leibniz understands it but in their own. Clarke did not offer any objection against the principle of sufficient reason, but it is clear from his application of it to various examples that he had nothing else in mind than our principle of sufficient cause (§XX), and it is on account of this that Leibniz frequently protested that Clarke had not understood him correctly. Yet the Englishman was only misled by the

ambiguity of the principle and one should not blame him for this, as if he had forgotten his own principles in the course of drawing his inferences.

§XLVIII. (*The origin of the principle of sufficient reason.*) If I might hazard a conjecture concerning the cause by which Leibniz was led to fabricate his principle, I would say that it is to be located in the fact that he did not define an efficient cause in terms of its essence but instead in terms of what amounts to *its sign or its mere effect*, which it produces in the human mind insofar as it is thought. For, since the efficient cause is that by which something is *produced*, so Leibniz asserted that it was that from which it is *cognized* why something is. He thus believed this to be a universal sign of the cause even though it only pertains to determining causes. From this he concluded, further, that no sooner is there a sufficient cause than it can be conceived from it why the thing is and why it exists in this way. For since no one can deny that whatever comes to be has a sufficient cause, he came to be persuaded through a false notion of cause that everything that comes to be is produced by a cause in such a way that it could not be omitted and could not have taken place otherwise under the posited circumstances, or that every sufficient cause is also completely determined to act and indeed to undertake an action in just such a way and no other. He applied this principle to mathematics, in which he was extraordinarily talented, and found it to be true. He determined that one must also explicate the moral sciences on the basis of this principle, and, insofar as these were not consistent with it, they must be transformed. This occasion strikes me as a useful one to prescribe caution to those who are in the habit of almost everywhere constructing their chosen definitions not on the basis of the nature of things but from mere signs.

§XLIX (*Why my opponents would not easily change their opinion.*) Although I have thoroughly refuted and limited this principle, I can nonetheless readily foresee that those who have already been captive to the contrary opinion for some time will not easily abandon it; indeed, I have learned from my own case how difficult this can be. I will therefore subjoin a few of the causes which tend to stand in the way of accepting the better opinion so that the upright among us, when they recognize that it is not arguments but other obstacles that prevent them from lending us their approval, might at that point be more willing to give way when arguments are presented. First, they tend to be displeased by the fact that we would put in the place of the principle of sufficient reason a great variety of other, and for the most part less straightforward propositions. In this way, the ambit of the sciences becomes broader and more troublesome, since otherwise the Leibnizian philosophy commends itself on account of its brevity and simplicity and contents itself with but a single proposition.²⁸ Yet, I urge one to keep in mind that truth and not simplicity should be sought. Moreover, they call to mind innumerable examples in which they have seen that their principle has actually held. I respond, however, that one might also point to innumerable cases where it is manifestly false; consider, namely, free actions, as well as their imputation and their norms. Third, we wish for the truth of the Leibnizian principle, since it seems that through it the manner of connection of

²⁸ Leibniz boasts of this in vain in his *Theodicy*, Pt. I, § 44 [H p. 148].

human actions can be more clearly explained, and the clearer a cognition is the greater the pleasure it produces. Yet, it is for the wise not to follow their desire but the truth; where, therefore, there is no clarity to be had other than a fictitious one, one which is not in agreement with the truth but hostile to it, it should not be pretended otherwise. For is not more obscure, but true, cognition to be preferred to imaginary clarity? I do not deny that something is contained in free actions which cannot be comprehended since we cannot clearly conceive of a causal connection except where the effect comes to be from a pre-existing striving with the impediments having been removed. However, it will never be able to be shown that everything is false which cannot be perfectly comprehended by us. Do we not then know the limits in which nature has enclosed us? I have furnished other criteria of truth in abundance, which no one will deny except perhaps on account of arrogance. Whatever is found on that relation to our cognitive capacities to be true, is true, however much it surpasses what we have grown accustomed to and our finitude. [...]

9

Georg Friedrich Meier: *Thoughts on the State of the Soul after Death* (1746)

Georg Friedrich Meier was born on March 29, 1718 in Ammendorf, a village near Halle an der Saale. On account of his delicate constitution, he was educated at home until 1727 by his mother and father, a pastor. After this, Meier briefly attended the famous Pietist orphanage in Halle, though ill-health interrupted his studies, and from 1729 to 1736 he received instruction in mathematics, Latin, and physics at a school in the house of Christoph Semmler, a polymath and educational innovator. Around the same time, Meier matriculated at the university in Halle, and in 1735 he began attending lectures by, among others, Alexander Gottlieb and Sigmund Jacob Baumgarten, on topics including metaphysics, logic, natural law, and moral philosophy. Meier attained the *Magister philosophiae* in Easter 1739 and was awarded his habilitation in September of that same year on the basis of a disputation on mathematics. After Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's departure for a position in Frankfurt an der Oder in early 1740 (shortly before Wolff's return to Halle), Meier took over his lectures, eventually becoming extraordinary professor of philosophy in 1746 (on Sigmund Jacob Baumgarten's recommendation), and then ordinary professor in 1748. Meier acquired an excellent reputation through his numerous and varied publications as well as through his lectures which were consistently well-attended, with one notable exception. In 1754, during a royal visit to Halle, Meier was summoned to an audience with Frederick II during which the king personally ordered him to use Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* as a textbook for a *collegium*. In spite of his doubts about the book's serviceability for the classroom, Meier complied with the order and thus taught the *Essay* for the first time in a German university, but only offered the course once on account of low enrollments. Meier was also heavily involved in the university, being elected twice to pro-rector (and in his first term in this office he was taken hostage for three days by occupying Austrian forces during the Seven Years War), and he taught and published actively until illness forced him to retire from lecturing in 1776. He died in Giebichenstein, near Halle, on June 21, 1777.

Meier's philosophical works span a wide range of topics. He published textbooks in logic, metaphysics, ethics, and aesthetics, influential books on hermeneutics, the Christian religion, and natural right, as well as numerous shorter treatises and essays on topics of more popular interest. Meier's views were influenced by Wolff but also and especially by his teachers and benefactors—the Baumgartens—with a number of